



## Report on the 4th Asian Science Editors' Conference and Workshop

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Science journals in Asia have generally still some way to go before they can reach the rigor and standards of journals published in the Western world. With the proliferation of academic scholarly output in the sciences in many Asian countries over the years, it is clear that not all research can be published in top international journals. Local journals in Asian countries are still needed to provide an avenue for the dissemination of new knowledge in the sciences as well as provide a platform for academics and graduate students to publish some of their work. There is a need for more local journals to embrace international best practices so that they can be indexed in the premier databases as well as achieve impact factors. These will also contribute towards raising standards of submissions to these journals as well as enhancing capacity building efforts in the higher education sector in the sciences. To further this broad mission in Asia, the Council of Asian Science Editors (CASE) was formed in 2014. A key platform for CASE to raise awareness of this mission has been the organizing of its annual Asian Science Editors' Conference and Workshop.

The 4th Asian Science Editors' Conference and Workshop was held in Ho Chi Minh City in Vietnam on July 6 and 7, 2017, with the theme on 'Promotion of Asian journals to international level.' This year's event was organized by CASE in collaboration with the Vietnam Association of Science Editing and Nong Lam University. Over 170 participants from various countries attended the 2-day event.

The conference program explored a range of issues pertinent to Asian science journals. With editors of international journals, representatives of international publishers, and staff from renowned editing services featured in the conference and workshop, participants had tremendous opportunities to hear from the experts as well as network with them. Such a confluence of speakers added great value to the event and reinforces the point that raising the standards of journals is a team effort.

In his welcome address, Prof Banh Tien Long (Hanoi University of Science and Technology, Vietnam) and President of CASE reiterated the role of CASE in promoting awareness of the need to raise standards of Asian journals in the sciences. Recognizing the importance of the conference, CASE is gratified to note that Prof Nguyen Hay, President of the host institution (Nong Lam University, Vietnam) graced the conference with his presence and thoughtful welcome speech. The congratulatory speech was delivered by Dang Vu Minh, President of the newly formed Vietnam Union of Science and Technology Associations.

**Received:** August 6, 2017  
**Accepted:** August 7, 2017

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Researchers in today's age need to confront a range of issues when publishing their manuscripts. In the plenary lecture on meeting the changing needs of the researcher, Chris Hammond (Elsevier, UK) provided useful perspectives in this regard. The first keynote presentation was given by Basil D'Souza from Editage, a company that provides editing services to authors. He provided some tips on how authors can get closer to publishers, and this is based on a global survey of academic authors done by the company. It is important for Asian journals to get on to one of the key indexing databases such as Scopus so that they can garner greater international visibility—this was the focus of the second keynote presentation by Wim Meester of Elsevier, an international publisher of journals and databases.

Peer review is a key practice in ensuring that manuscripts submitted to journals are evaluated by peers in the respective fields. Their review reports are very useful in helping editors make an informed decision on the manuscript as well as help authors with feedback on their work. Peer review is central to maintaining standards of journals as well as contributing to the building up of a corpus of knowledge in a field. Four presentations provided useful pointers on various aspects of the peer review process: Cheol-Heui Yun (Seoul National University, Korea) on peer review in agricultural journals; Sun Huh (Hallym University, Korea) on peer review in medical journals; Tetsuro Majima (Osaka University, Japan) on peer review in journals published by the American Chemical Society; and Nguyen Hay (Nong Lam University, Vietnam) on peer review of Vietnamese journals. Even though the review process usually follows a standard procedure, the sharing of peer review procedures from different journals helped to provide insider views on the peer review process for conference participants.

One of the problems faced by Asian academics, especially those in developing countries, when contributing articles to international journals is proficiency in the English language. Even if the science content is robust, getting the message in their manuscript across with convincing fluency in the English language is often a challenge. This has implications for acceptance of the manuscript by international journals as well as in raising standards of local journals published in the English language. In the context of the foregoing, the session on manuscript editing offered useful pointers from three speakers who explored a diversity of issues: Sun Huh (Hallym University, Korea) on manuscript editing and importance of international publishing practices; Jae-Hwa Chang (InfoLumi, Korea) on the practice of manuscript editing; and Soon Kim (Cactus Communications, Korea) on promoting a journal for maximum impact.

Ethics in publication has received greater attention in re-

cent times, not surprisingly owing to the pressure for academics to publish. Work reported in manuscripts must be in consonance with established ethical guidelines. Four presentations in the session on publication ethics explored multi-faceted aspects of this issue: Eun-Seong Hwang (University of Seoul, Korea) on research misconduct in Korea; Son Le Ngoc (International University of Ho Chi Minh, Vietnam) on plagiarism detection in the Vietnamese academic literature; Soo-Young Kim (Hallym University, Korea) on whether all retractions by authors from journals are appropriate; and R. Subramaniam (Singapore National Academy of Science and National Institute of Education, NTU) on how to teach publication ethics in graduate school.

Journals in different disciplines or, for that matter, even those in the same discipline, do not often follow the same format. The session on standards in journal formats explored various aspects of this issue. Worachart Sirawaraporn (Mahidol University, Thailand) focused on front matter - masthead, verso page, and recto page. Ki-Hong Kim (Ajou University, Korea) explored aspects on the first page format of articles; and Hyungsun Kim (Inha University, Korea) delivered two presentations: back matter-instructions and copyright transfer form as well as the practice of journal format

In recent years, the term 'open access' has come on board the lexicon of a number of journals. Broadly, it refers to the distribution of journal content on a complimentary basis. Often it also entails cost to the authors. Journal content available for free on the web can help to raise citation counts for journal articles as well as contribute towards enhancing impact factors of journals. To provide different perspectives on an emerging field, the session on open access featured speakers addressing various issues: Ki-Hong Kim (Ajou University, Korea) on some of the key terms (gold and green, platinum, public access, free access, repository) on open access; Tae-Sul Seo (Korea Institute of Science and Technology Information, Korea) on open access of full text databases in Asia; Jeong-Wook Seo (Seoul National University, Korea) on the European policy on open access from the year 2020; and Xin Bi (Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University, China) on how to register a journal in the Directory of Open Access Journals.

Another term that has entered the journal nomenclature in recent times is 'Crossref'. A powerful platform to interlink various kinds of content in the scholarly literature—for example, journals, conference papers, books and technical reports, the importance of Crossref is increasingly being recognized by the scholarly community. In the session on Crossref, there were four presentations. Sun Huh (Hallym University, Korea) focused on the major services offered by CrossRef as well as on the recent progress of Crossref. Nguyen Huy Bich (Ho Chi Minh City University of Agriculture and Forestry, Vietnam)

presented on similarity checks currently used in Vietnam for scientific publications. Shivendra Naidoo (Turnitin, UK) shared on how Crossref similarity check: can safeguard academic integrity and support publication ethics.

An innovative feature of this year's conference was the session on the meetings of journal editors in the different disciplines: agriculture journal editors, chaired by Komang Wirawan (Bogor Agricultural University, Indonesia); engineering journal editors, chaired by Hyungsun Kim (Inha University, Korea); and natural science journal editors, chaired by Tetsuro Majima (Osaka University, Japan). This coming together of journal editors had been useful in exchanging views, sharing best practices and discussing challenges facing editors as they go about doing their work. The vigorous discussions in these sessions have been illuminating not only for the editors but also for the other participants who wished to learn more about how journal editors go about doing their work.

With most journals also having an online presence, the issue of digital standards has also surfaced in recent times. In the session on digital standards, there were three presentations. Youn-Sang Cho (M2Community, Korea) focused on JATS (journal article tag suite) XML (extensible markup language) for PubMed Central, ScienceCentral. Hyun Jung Yi

(Hanyang University, Korea) shared findings on Crossmark, funding data, and text and data mining. Nobuko Miyairi (ORCID, Japan) focused on ORCID, a digital tool for researcher identity.

The conference also provided a useful platform for researchers and graduate students to share their findings through the medium of posters. A 'Best Poster Award' was given to the authors of the poster that communicated its findings most clearly.

Overall, the spectrum of issues covered in this year's conference provided useful insights and perspectives relevant to the science journal scene in Asia. The coming together of various stakeholders in the system as well as the audiences who came from different countries reinforced the point that science journals in Asia need to take cognizance of multifarious issues as they seek to raise their standards. CASE places on record the great hospitality of Nong Nam University which hosted the conference.

### Conflict of Interest

No potential conflict of interest relevant to this article was reported.